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Whatever a hater may do to a hater, or an enemy to an enemy, a wrongly-directed mind will do a greater mischief. —*Dhammapada*

THEOSOPHY

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CIVIL WAR OF MANKIND

INSOFAR as proclaimed ideologies really represent the issues being fought over in the war, the struggle is to adjust or settle a difference of opinion as to the nature of man. Of course, men will not discover their true nature by destroying one another, nor will the respective theories defended either gain or lose in truth by victory or defeat. Out of it all, what may come is the reflection by a thoughtful few on the meaning of a war arising from such an issue.

This war, as students of propaganda never cease from pointing out, has from the beginning been between combinations of psychological and physical forces, ranged on both sides, struggling against each other. But the war is even more essentially psychological than this suggests. The contestants are striving to prove half-truths, distorted images of ancient wisdom, caught up and mirrored in the minds of men who have little capacity to grasp their true meaning.

Dark shadows of the caste system hang over Europe; differences of evolutionary degree have been crystallized as absolutes and misapplied by violence. In other parts of the world, the doctrine of independence has been so exaggerated and exploited by the powerful that Nature has forcibly responded to assert the fact of *inter*-dependence, and because of human blindness, the lesson threatens to be accepted with but superficial understanding.

This is no war between the purely Good and the undoubtedly Bad of the human species; it is a war by humanity on Nature, an arrogant insistence by nearly the entire human race that the incomplete and fallible theories of this generation be accepted as part of the Natural Order. In such a war there can be no victory, but only the miserable and disheartening failure of disillusionment, the harvest of what Bossuet called "active ignorance."

The resolution of all these problems must finally come through knowledge of Theosophy. How else explain the mysteries of heredity and environment, which can be dissolved only by the doctrine of reincarnation? How else understand the confused class relationships that continually present themselves, despite all efforts at leveling, and to the despair of the theoretical socialist? Where can we seek, besides in *Isis Unveiled,* for the laws which govern the seizure, of whole populations, sometimes, by demonic rages and fears? Out of the *Turba* of the Karmic past of nations come rejected disciples, strong in will, with inverted knowledge of human nature, to balance the ledger of moral retribution.

The Karma of families, of groups, nations and races, must be considered. Ascending cycles of intellectual development, pursued by late arrivals on this stage of evolution, meet and mingle with decadent but powerful currents of efflux in race evolution—betrayers and betrayed, sophist and simple follower, loyal simpleton and deceiving blackguard: all these are mixed by hundreds, thousands and millions in the peoples of the western world.

Lighted by the crimson glare of Mara's jewel, all human nerves drawn tight by the unending tension of Kali Yug, the war goes on between the forces of light and darkness in man—which is simply and singly a struggle to know the truth. How little we succeed is plain for all to see.

What might have been, had the world, or even a portion of the world, accepted the knowledge brought by H. P. Blavatsky, no one can say. Yet the fact that this civil war of mankind is little more than a medieval instrument of torture to extract from wracked humanity the truth about the soul is evidence enough that the race is woefully behind in its evolution. This is a cycle when men everywhere should be looking inward and upward; when, with the changing currents in the evolutionary tide, the time has arrived for psychological knowledge to be realized by the race. Failing in this, we kill one another for the sake of psychological theories—theories of the soul!

There is truth in the caste system—a great truth. It represents as real a classification of the principles of society as does the septenary constitution of the individual. No soul in its long journey from planetary birth to adeptship can avoid the duties and the lessons of each basic type of service and interrelation with his fellows. Just as religion itself, symbol of the highest in man, suffers the lowest degradation of any human institution, so the caste idea, once a meta-

physical verity and a natural fact, becomes the materialized repository of lie, insult and indignity. Yet, because of the truth in it, this idea permeates every social order on earth, even the revered democracies, to whom it is theoretically anathema. The aristocratic principle—which is but a simplified designation of the caste idea—emerges in corrupt glory to dominate every political party that ever existed. The power of suggestion, for good or evil, the teacher-disciple relation, the rapport of healer and sick one—these are psycho-physical laws of nature with far-reaching social applications. Whatever we name their operation, however we disguise them, they are present and operate; when recognized and understood, they work for good, when slyly used by clever but unscrupulous men, they bring untold evil to mankind.

The Spirit in Man is everywhere equal, but individual men are not, and the sooner we admit it, and attempt to understand the moral significance of human differences, the sooner will we learn to work with, instead of against, the laws of Nature.

The fact of so many inequalities throughout human experience is a massive demonstration of the law of evolution. Through manifold differential relations, the ego must learn to balance his life according to the laws which connect him with the rest of life. As numbers run from zero to infinity, having synthesis only in the all-inclusive One, which is at once the Nothing and the All, so the complexities of life are but the mathematics of the soul, to be drawn into unity by the Self who is greater than any part, the absolute master of every relation.

The weak man must learn to grow into the strength of self-reliance; hence, he is cast into situations that divest him of any aid save that which arises from within. The strong man must learn to be gentle, for always stronger than he will be the inexorable law of Unity; the whole *is* greater than the parts. Men are oppressed, their pride humbled, their false hopes destroyed and their illusions exploded by whatever karmic instruments are available. The pride that goeth before the fall of one may serve to humble the conceit of another, and so the angular projections of the lower nature wear upon each other. Such is Nature's method of using the forces at hand in the perfection of her economy.

Social structures are likewise the means for learning; they offer the immediate experiences men need as souls, and, to the reflective, present larger lessons in human behavior, displaying the peculiar laws of group action, of *organized* kamic and psychic tendency.

Theories of human nature current in the world take no account of the evolution of the soul. The soul has its own order of progression, and masses of souls their special group relations, and all these orders are governed by distributive Karma, related by past collective actions, their present confused by the ignorance which conceals the meaning of the processes which are now working out. Conflicts among men and nations, in this age of transition, will be more and more characterized by psychological factors, degraded and made into fanatical crusades because of the superior origin of the motivations now forced down to a material level. No animal is as beastly as a man fallen from his estate, and the combats of men, in an age when they should be studying together the mysteries of soul, and finding the keys that Adepts have provided, will exhibit parallel marks of depravity.

The lessons of this war will be learned by men of discernment.

"THE CYCLE'S MEANING"

We of the nineteenth century, hearing of new discoveries and inventions every day, and dreaming of great advances in all arts and sciences, are the same individuals who inhabited bodies among the powerful and brilliant as well as wicked, Atlanteans, whose name is forever set immortal in the Atlantic Ocean. The flower, so to speak, of this revival or resurrection, is and is to be on the American continent. I will not say the United States, for mayhap, when the sun of our power has risen again, there may be no United States for it to rise upon.

It is because, when we were in Atlantean bodies, we did wickedly. We degraded spiritual things and turned mighty powers over nature to base uses; we did *in excelsis* that which is hinted at now in the glorification of wealth, of material goods, of the individual over the spiritual and above the great Man—Humanity. This has now its compensation in our present inability to attain what we want or to remove from among us the grinding-stones of poverty. We are, as yet, only preparers, much as we may exalt our plainly crude American development.

Herein lies the very gist of the cycle's meaning. It is a preparatory cycle with much of necessary destruction in it; for, before construction, we must have some disintegration. We are preparing here in America a new race which will exhibit the perfection of the glories that I said were being slowly brought to the surface from the long forgotten past.

—WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

FROM THE NOTE BOOK OF AN UNPOPULAR PHILOSOPHER

The Esoteric Value of Certain Words and Deeds In Social Life

A DEFINITION of *Public Opinion.* The gathering of a few fogies positively electrified by fanaticism and force of habit, who act on the many noodles negatively electrified by indifference. The acceptation of uncharitable views on "suggestion" by "telepathic impact" (whatever that may mean). The work of unconscious psychology.

Sympathetic grief.—The expression thereof in Society, for one's sorrow, is like a solemn funeral procession, in which the row of mourning coaches is long, indeed, but the carriages of which are all empty.

Mutual exchange of compliments.—Expressions of delight and other acting in cultured society are the fig-leaves of the civilised Adams and Eves. These "aprons" to conceal truth are fabricated incessantly in social Edens, and their name is—*politeness.*

Keeping the Sabbath.—Throwing public contumely on, and parading one's superiority over Christ, "one greater than the temple" and Sabbath, who stood for his disciples' rights to "break" the Sabbath, for the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath (Matt. xii. and Mark ii., etc.).

Attending Divine Service.—Breaking the express commandment of Jesus. Becoming "as the hypocrites are," who love to pray in Synagogue and Temples, "that they may be seen of men." (Matt. vi.).

Taking the Oath, on the Bible.—A Christian law, devised and adopted to perpetuate and carry out the unequivocal commandment of the Founder of Christianity, "Swear not at all, neither by heaven nor by the earth" (Matt. v.). As the heaven and the earth are supposed to have been created *only* by God, a book written by *men* thus received the prerogative over the former.

Unpopularity.—We hate but those whom we envy or fear. Hatred is a concealed and forced homage rendered to the person hated; a tacit admission of the superiority of the unpopular character.

Note.—This article was first printed by H. P. Blavatsky in *Lucifer* for September and October, 1887.

The true value of *back-biting and slander.* A proof of the fast coming triumph of the victim chosen. The bite of the fly when the creature feels its end approaching.

A Few Illustrations to the Point from Schopenhauer.

Socrates was repeatedly vilified and thrashed by the opponents of his philosophy, and was as repeatedly urged by his friends to have his honour avenged in the tribunals of Athens. Kicked by a rude citizen, in the presence of his followers, one of these expressed surprise for his not resenting the insult, to which the Sage replied:

"Shall I then feel offended, and ask the magistrate to avenge me, if I also happen to be kicked by an ass?"

To another remark whether a certain man had abused and called him names, he quietly answered:

"No; for none of the epithets he used can possibly apply to me." (From Plato's "Georgics".)

The famous cynic, Cratus, having received from the musician Nicodromus a blow which caused his face to swell, coolly fixed a tablet upon his brow, inscribed with the two words, *"Nicodromus facit."* The flute player hardly escaped with his life from the hands of the populace, which viewed Cratus as a household god.

Seneca, in his work *"De Constanta Sapientis,"* treats most elaborately of insults in words and deeds, or *contumelia,* and then declares that no Sage ever pays the smallest attention to such things.

—"Well, yes!" the reader will exclaim, "but these men were all of them *Sages!*"

—"And you, are you then only *fools?* Agreed!"

To Show Anger.—No *"cultured"* man or woman will ever show anger in Society. To check and restrain every sign of annoyance shows good manners, certainly, but also considerable achievement in hypocrisy and dissimulation. There is an occult side to this rule of good breeding expressed in an Eastern proverb: "Trust not the face which never shows signs of anger, nor the dog that never barks." Cold-blooded animals are the most venomous.

Non-resistance to Evil.—To brag of it is to invite all evil-doers to sit upon you. To practise it openly is to lead people into the temptation of regarding you as a coward. Not to resist the evil you have never created nor merited, to eschew it yourself, and help others quietly to get out of its way, is the only wise course open to the lover of wisdom.

"Love Thy Neighbor."—When a parson has preached upon this subject, his pious congregation accepts it as tacit permission to slander and vilify their friends and acquaintances in neighbouring pews.

International Brotherhood.—When a Mussulman and a Christian swear mutual friendship, and pledge themselves to be brothers, their two formulas differ somewhat. The Moslem says: "Thy mother shall be my mother, my father thy father, my sister thy hand maid, and thou shalt be my brother." To which the Christian answers: "Thy mother and sister shall be my hand-maidens, thy wife shall be my wife, and my wife shall be thy dear sister."—*Amen.*

Brave as a Lion.—The highest compliment—in appearance—paid to one's courage; a comparison with a bad-smelling wild-beast—in reality. The recognition, also, of the superiority of animal over human bravery, considered as a virtue.

A Sheep.—A weak, silly fellow, figuratively, an insulting, contemptuous epithet among laymen; but one quite flattering among churchmen, who apply it to "the people of God" and the members of their congregations, comparing them to *sheep* under the guidance of the lamb.

The Code of Honour.—In France—to seduce a wife and kill her husband. There, offended honour can feel satisfied only with blood; here, a wound inflicted upon the offender's pocket suffices.

The Duel as a Point of Honour.—The duel being an institution of Christendom and civilization, neither the old Spartans, nor yet the Greeks or Romans knew of it, as they were only uncivilized heathens.—(*See Schopenhauer.*)

Forgive and Forget.—"We should freely forgive, but forget rarely," says Colton. "I will not be revenged, and this I owe to my enemy; but I will *remember,* and this I owe to myself." This is real practical wisdom. It stands between the ferocious "Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth" of the Mosaic Law, and the command to turn the left cheek to the enemy when he has smitten you on the right. Is not the latter a direct encouraging of sin?

Practical Wisdom.—On the tree of silence hangs the fruit of peace. The secret thou wouldst not tell to thine enemy, tell it not to thy friend.—(*Arabic.*)

Civilized Life.—Crowded, noisy and full of vital power, is modern Society to the eye of matter; but there is no more still and silent, empty and dreary desert than that same Society to the

spiritual eye of the Seer. Its right hand freely and lavishly bestows ephemeral but costly pleasures, while the left grasps greedily the leavings and often grudges the necessities of show. All our social life is the result and consequence of that unseen, yet ever present autocrat and despot, called *selfishness* and *Egotism*. The strongest will becomes impotent before the voice and authority of *Self*.

I am sternly rebuked for some remarks made in the last number.[1] My reflections with regard to the respective value of Mussulman and Christian pledges exchanged, as also on the doubtful propriety of zoological symbolism in the Churches—are pronounced wantonly wicked and calculated to hurt the tender feelings of Christian readers—if any. Protestant England—it is solemnly urged—is full of truly good men and women, of sincere church-goers, who "walk in the ways of the Lord." No doubt there are such, and no doubt they do, or try to, which is a step in advance of those who do not. But then none of the "righteous" need recognize their faces in the mirror presented by the "Unpopular Philosopher" only to the *unrighteous*. And again—

"THE WAYS OF THE LORD. . . ." The ways of *which* Lord? Is the jealous Lord of Moses meant, the God who thundered amidst the lightnings of Sinai, or the meek "Lord" of the Mount of Olives and Calvary? Is it the stern God that saith *"vengeance is mine,"* and who must be *"worshipped in fear,"* or the "man-God" who commanded *to love one's neighbours as oneself, to forgive one's enemies and bless those who revile us?* For the ways of the two Lords are wide apart, and can never meet.

No one who has studied the Bible can deny for one single moment that a large proportion (if *happily* not all) of modern Christians walk indeed "in the *ways* of the Lord"—Number I. This one is the "Lord" who *had respect unto Abel,* because the meat of his sacrifice smelt sweet in his nostrils; the "Lord" who commanded the Israelites to *spoil* the Egyptians of their jewels of silver and gold;* also to *"kill every male among the little ones,"* as *"every woman . . . but all the women children* (virgins) *to keep alive for themselves"* (Numb. XXXI., 17, et seq.) ; and to commit other actions too coarse to be repeated in any respectable publication.

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[1] This article was first printed by H. P. Blavatsky in *Lucifer* for November, 1887. —Eds. THEOSOPHY.

*And no doubt also the Anglo-Indians to *spoil* the King of Burmah of his?

Hence the modern warriors who achieve such feats (with the modern improvement occasionally, of shooting their enemies out of the mouths of big guns) walk, most undeniably, "in the ways" of the Lord of the Jews, but *never in the ways* of Christ. So does the modern trader who keeps the Sabbath most rigorously, attending Divine Service thrice on that day, after treating during the whole week his hired clerk as the brood of Ham "who shall be their (Shem and Japhet's) servants."

So does, likewise, he who helps himself, David-like, to a Bath-Sheba, the wife of Uriah, without the least concern whether he simply robs or kills the Hittite husband. For he has every right to take for his sampler "a friend of God"—the *God* of the old covenant.

But will either of these pretend they walk in the ways of their Lord of the *new* Dispensation? Yet, he who raises his voice in a protest against the "ways" of the Mosaic God, therefore, in favour of those preached by the very *antithesis* of Jehovah—the meek and gentle "Man of Sorrow"—he is forthwith set up on the pillory and denounced to public opprobrium as an *anti-Christian* and an Atheist! This, in the face of the words: *"Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven. . . . And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand . . . and great was the fall thereof!"*

THE "WILL OF MY FATHER?" Is this "Father" identical with the God of Mount Sinai and of the Commandments? Then what is the meaning of the whole Chapter v. of Matthew, of the Sermon on the Mount, in which every one of these Commandments is virtually criticised and destroyed by the new amendments?

"Ye have heard that it hath been said 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth'; but I say unto you that you resist not evil," etc.

Glance at the big centres of our Christian civilisations. Look at the jails, the court and the prison-houses, the tribunals, and the police; see the distress, with starvation and prostitution as its results. Look at the host of the men of law and of judges; and then see how far the words of Christ, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, Judge not that ye be not judged," apply to the whole structure of our modern civilised life, and how far we may be called *Christians.*

How well the commandment—*"He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone"*—is now obeyed, may be seen by fol-

lowing day after day, the law reports for slander, calumny and defamation. Obedience to the injunction, and warning against the sin of offending children, *"these little ones,"* of whom is the Kingdom of Heaven, is found in the brutal treatment of fatherless children on the streets by the Christian police, of other children by their parents, and finally, in the merciless flogging of wee bits of culprits driven to crime by their own parents and starvation. And is it those who denounce such an anti-Christian spirit in legislation, the Pharisaical church and society, who shall be branded for speaking the truth? The magistrate, who has sworn on the Bible—contrary to Christ's express injunction—to administer justice; the pious defaulter, who swears falsely on it, but cannot be convicted; the sanctimonious millionaire who fattens on the blood and sweat of the poor; and the aristocratic "Jezebel" who casts mud from her carriage wheels on her "fallen" sister, on the street, a *victim perchance, of one of the men of her own high caste*—all these call themselves Christians. The *anti-Christians* are those who dare to look behind that veil of respectability.

The best answer to such paradoxical denunciation may be found in one of "Saladin's" admirable editorials. The reader must turn to *The Secular Review* for October 22nd, 1887, and read some pertinent reflections on "The Bitter Cry of Outcast London," and the "Child-thieves" flogging. Well may a "heathen Chinee" or a "mild Hindu" shudder in horror at the picture in it of that "drawing of blood" out of the baby-bodies of infant thieves. The process is executed by a Christian policeman acting under the orders and in the presence of a righteous Christian magistrate. Has either of the two ever given a thought during the "child-torture" to the words of their Christ: *"Whosoever shall offend one of these little ones, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he were cast into the sea"?*

Yes, they *are* walking "in the ways of the God of Israel"! For, as *"it repented the Lord that he had made man"* so wicked and so imperfect, that "Lord" drowned and destroyed him "from the face of the Earth," without more ado. Verily so, *"both man and beast, and the creeping thing and the fowls,"* though the latter had neither sinned, nor were they "wicked." And why shouldn't the righteous men on Earth do likewise? It repents the Christian citizens of pious LUGDUNUM perchance also, that they create the starving little wretches, the foundlings abandoned to vice from the day of their birth? And the truly good Christian men, who would believe

themselves damned to hell-fire were they to miss their Sabbath Service, forbidden by law to drown *their* creatures, resort to the next best thing they can; they "draw blood" from those little ones whom their "Saviour" and Master took under his special protection.

May the shadow of "Saladin" never grow less, for the fearless honest words of truth he writes:—

"And whose blood was in the veins of these two boys? Whose blood reddened the twigs of the birch? Peradventure that of the magistrate himself, or of the chaplain of the prison. For mystical are the grinding of the wheels of the mill of misery. And God looks on and tolerates. And I am accounted a heretic, and my anti-Christian writings are produced against me in a Court of Justice to prevent my getting justice, because I fail to see in all this how Christianity 'elevates' woman and casts a 'halo of sacred innocence round the tender years of the child.' So be it. I have flung down my gage of battle, and the force of bigotry may break me to death; but it shall never bend me to submission. Unsalaried and ill-supported, I fight as stubbornly as if the world flung at my feet its gold and laurels and huzzas; for the weak need a champion and the wronged an avenger. It is necessary that Sham find an opponent and Hypocrisy a foe: these they will find in me, be the consequences what they may. "SALADIN."

This is the epitomized history of the "Unpopular Philosopher"; aye, the story of all those who, in the words of "Lara," know that "Christianity will never save humanity, but humanity may save Christianity," *i.e.*, the ideal spirit of the Christos-Buddha—of THEOSOPHY.

Where are we going to? Ahimé![2] We live in strange and weird times. Ours are the days of Sheffield plating on the moral plane. True silver has almost gone out of use and has fallen, like the Indian rupees, far below par. This is not a time for golden rules, for people prefer moral pinchbeck. Nature, as well as man, seems to crack on all her seven seams, and the universal screws have assuredly got loose somewhere, if not everywhere, on their hinges, after the fashion of this earth. Paradox flourishes and axioms are running to seed. Nature and man vie with each other in shams. The Lord God of our state religions is proclaimed a god of mercy, of peace

[2] This and the following item were first printed in *Lucifer*, September, 1888.—Eds. THEOSOPHY.

and love, and at the same time he is a "man of war"; "the Lord our God" who "fights for Israel." "Thou shalt not kill," says the commandment; and on this principle improvements in murderous, man-killing engines are being invented by the "humble" servants of the said Power—for a consideration. Rev. F. Bosworth, a *man of God and peace,* has just been rewarded by the paternal Government with a premium of £2,000, for "the advancement of gunnery science."

Esoterically explained, this "advancement" means, I suppose, in political symbology a cannon possessing a ten-fold greater power and rapidity for killing the bodies of one's enemies, than the fulmination of Church canons for killing their enemies' souls. Hence, the reward to ingenious parsons. Every Christian nation is busy now with preparing guns and rifles superior to those possessed by its neighbours. Duels fought between two nations seem to be judged by a different code of honour from those between two individuals. Battles won by *trickery,* are laid down to "military genius" and regarded as "the poetical and imaginative side of the war." (*Fortnightly Review,* Lord Wolseley). Trickery in commercial or private business is punished with hard labour. In the former case, the cunning and unexpected employment of weapons of superior murderousness and devilish cruelty are lauded and their successful use made to bring the highest military honours; whereas the private antagonist who uses an unequal weapon or takes an unfair advantage in any way is counted a murderer and a felon. So, statesmen who "lie for their country's good" and derive benefits for it by foul deception have promotion and honours; while their less culpable imitator who plays with marked cards and loaded dice, or "pulls" a race, is scourged out of decent company. So chronic and congenital is our obtuseness, that we have never yet been able to distinguish the one moral baseness from the other. But to a reflective philosopher, the difference between such a modern statesman or general and a modern blackleg and a coward is imperceptible.

The Verdict of Posterity. In those days of the forthcoming age Solomon shall sit in judgment over David. The century that shall be born shall pass its sentence over the century which is now fast dying. And, the grandchildren of the modern theosophists will have to find a verdict for, or against their sires. What shall it be? Perhaps, there are those who know, but who of them shall tell! Those who can see into the womb of futurity and could prophesy, keep aloof from the sneers of the Philistines. In our days of Iconoclasm and prosaic realism he is no philosopher—not even an

"unpopular" one—who dabbles in things unseen. Let us abstain, since Theosophists are denied the privileges granted to certain astrologers—let us rather render to Caesar that which belongs to Caesar; the full homage due to the eminent virtues which characterize our age. How glaringly its bright image falls on the dark screen of the Past! what a contrast between its Christian purity, fortitude, charity, chastity and unselfishness, and the vices and dissipation of—say—its long departed predecessor, the age of the Imperial and Pagan Rome! This is affirmed in scores of works, preached from thousands of pulpits. What will be the *impartial* opinion of Century XX. about its predecessor is easy to see. Our historians are the sons and descendants of those patristic biographers who made of the Emperor Julian an apostate, and of Constantine a Saint. Fear not then the verdict of thy immediate posterity, O Century XIX. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy womb, in any case. For, whether that fruit be green or over-ripe, godly or diabolical, so long as thy rotten civilisation goes on producing historians, so long shall thy policy of plunder and bloodshed be called civic and military virtues, and sham, lie and hypocrisy stand proclaimed as Sparto-Christian ethics.

"The True Nature of Theosophy"

If the Theosophical movement were one of those numerous modern crazes, as harmless at the end as they are evanescent, it would be simply laughed at—as it is now by those who still do not understand its real purport—and left severely alone. But it is nothing of the kind. Intrinsically, Theosophy is the most serious movement of this age; and one, moreover, which threatens the very life of most of the time-honoured humbugs, prejudices, and social evils of the day—those evils which fatten and make happy the upper ten and their imitators and sycophants, the wealthy dozens of the middle classes, while they positively crush and starve out of existence the millions of the poor. Think of this, and you will easily understand the reason of such a relentless persecution by those others who, more observant and perspicacious, do see the true nature of Theosophy, and therefore dread it.

—H. P. B.

THE OUTLINE OF THE PATH

THE essence of Theosophy is a belief in the continuity of spiritual evolution for every living intelligence in nature. Great Teachers of Theosophy have described themselves, simply, as those whose belief in this doctrine and its natural corollary—the interdependence in evolution of all beings—has been confirmed by living and learning in its light. They have applied the philosophy by constantly striving to awaken in others a sense of responsibility for the outcome of the long voyage upon which all manifested life has embarked. The teachings they have passed on to men may rightly be called *Theo*-sophy, for they imply a God-like destiny, an infinite and self-determined future.

The soul-evoking philosophies of the Krishnas, Buddhas, Platos, and H. P. Blavatskys of every age, strike answering chords of inner responsiveness in the greatest of men because of this inspiring view of man's nature and destiny. The meaning of the path begins to emerge, outlined ever more clearly against receding mists of mental confusion and moral apathy. The reality of Theosophy is found on this Path, along which each can travel with true conviction when ready for the journey. It is well marked for all who, in seeking wisdom, impel themselves "by doing service, by strong search, by questions and by humility." Along it have marched the elect of all centuries and races.

Some have come to join this self-appointed company after exhausting the partial truths of popular religion. They found their soul needs awakened, but not fulfilled. Some have come through the doors of speculative philosophy, borne along at first by force of mind rather than needs of heart. They come, occasionally, from a desire to understand nature as a whole through widening application of genuine scientific inquiry. But whatever the external means of entrance to this old path, all its wayfarers have shared an unquenchable thirst for knowledge—knowledge that will reveal man's rightful place in the scheme of things.

These pilgrims have found elder brothers of a mystic family waiting to assist them. Called Adepts, Initiates, and Masters of Wisdom, in the tradition of the East, and Saviors and Great Teachers in the West, these elder spiritual brothers help give new light to minds

and new fire to hearts. The first thing to be seen clearly with the light these friends of man bring is that higher forms of wisdom cannot be acquired for self alone; that motive must be to serve the whole: "Point out the way. . . . Give light and comfort to the toiling pilgrim, and seek out him who knows still less than thou, who in his wretched desolation sits starving for the bread of Wisdom." Through true teaching comes true learning.

Those who tread this path can be recognized by sure signs, and will recognize, by the same signs, those of their own kind. If their efforts are conceived that they may be shared, if their forward steps are taken with hand outstretched behind, they are one with the spirit of the Company. It matters little how humble their mental abilities, nor how many others are able to speak from higher levels of ascent with tones of a surer and wider wisdom. *Their* task is the same. Always will be *their* place, from which they may reach ahead to those who can teach them, and reach behind to those who know still less.

To attain this perception is to have a spiritual vision of the interdependence of all beings. This wisdom alone can be called "divine" —divine because it is the highest, because it embraces a universal view. Theosophist is the name of many to whom this vision is real. But the ranks of true theosophists include every sincere friend of mankind who has fought and sacrificed with a semblance of this truth in his heart.

There have been and will be many who somehow find the heart of things in popular philosophies and religions, for each world view touches somewhere the core of truth. But the ways of religions pursue a roundabout course, ofttimes presenting obstacles to wider vision, rather than means for self-clarification. As the problems of a great and confused modern age increase, the influence of dogma brings millions to the spiritual inertia of blind faith, or precipitates them into the temporary oblivion of a sensual materialism. Those who have represented Theosophy to the world have often willingly lived a sacrificial existence that Theosophical ideas might *be* the "helping hand" to those who starve in smoldering dissatisfaction without faith in man and faith in life.

The Teacher would reach out to all those who need, yet he cannot, for though all need, all do not know their need. With mind absorbed in the senses, many have encased themselves in a chrysalis impervious alike to soul within and life without. Others fit over the eyes of

mind and soul the blinding hood of religious dogma. These two selfish allegiances include all those who have intellectally denied the reality of spiritual evolution. That reality ceases to exist for them until their chrysalis is brutally but justly shattered by the conquering force of a relentless friend—the suffering that impels to revaluation. Until the mind and heart are searching, no teacher can teach the learner who will not learn.

Yet there is bright assurance that few have completely immersed themselves in the self-satisfaction that denies the need of an ever-widening view. The rank and file of materialists are mixed in faith. They yet feel and believe many things that their minds refuse to consciously voice. In the regimented array of religious believers it is but a few who fail to live spiritually beyond the confines of arbitrary creed. The host of mankind continues to travel toward wisdom and understanding, striving to overcome the mental distortions of materialism and religious orthodoxy. These check, but do not halt, the travellers. If they continue to seek, they will at last find.

To each potential pilgrim on the path of wisdom must come a vision of the meaning of life in terms of self-directed spiritual evolution. Not written word, not teacher, not even sage, can bring that vision to him, yet may the wayfarer see its reflection in one or all of these. He may see, too, evidence of the noble company that he will some day join. Thus the Theosophist teaches, and in the teaching learns still more of the way to realize and share a heritage of wisdom that each can make his own.

"The Best Tactics"

As every fact hath its roots in the soul, and if the soul were changed, would cease to be, or would become some other thing, therefore, the proper administration of outward things will always rest on a just apprehension of their cause and origin, that is, the good man will be the wise man, and the single-hearted, the politic man. Every violation of truth is not only a sort of suicide in the liar, but is a stab at the health of human society. On the most profitable lie, the course of events presently lays a destructive tax; whilst frankness proves to be the best tactics, for it invites frankness, puts the parties on a convenient footing, and makes their business a friendship. Trust men, and they will be true to you; treat them greatly, and they will show themselves great, though they make an exception in your favor to all their rules of trade.

—Emerson

FINGER POSTS OF THE MIDDLE AGES

Jacob Boehme

HOWEVER dark the cycle, the wisdom religion has never been left without a witness. Somewhere in the world, at all times, is One Who Points the Way. Whatever his place in the eyes of men, whatever his special function in the promulgation of truth, no matter what symbolical language he employs, his message bespeaks his kinship with other witnesses in other cycles. The identity of doctrine among all the messengers establishes their single source—the sun of spiritual enlightenment of which all truths are rays.

The history of mind is written in cycles. Cycles of spirituality and mysticism alternate with periods of materiality and prejudice. One of the cycles of spiritual influence is the centenary one: towards the close of every century mankind receives help "in a marked and definite way" from the Masters of Wisdom, the Spiritual Benefactors of Humanity. One such "centenary companion," was Jacob Boehme, whom H. P. Blavatsky called "the nursling of the Nirmanakayas," watched over and guided by those who stand ever ready to help those who help their fellow-men.

Jacob Boehme was wholly unlettered, but he knew the truth. He was a natural clairvoyant of most wonderful powers, according to H. P. B., and a "thorough born Mystic." Born a Christian (in the year 1575), his especial contribution to the Theosophical Movement consisted in showing Christians a "way out" of the Church dogmas, and a "way in" to the real teaching of Jesus, for Boehme saw the esoteric truth hidden in the Christian Bible. In a former birth, H. P. B. says, he had "attained through extreme purity of life and efforts in the right direction almost to a *Yogi*-state of holiness and saintship," and his nature was thus open to the pure noëtic vision of a seer, the direct intercommunion between the intellectual and the spiritual Ego. Such was his power of direct perception that although he had no education or acquaintance with science his books are found to be full of scientific truths, and one writer, in tracing his influence on Newton, has remarked that "every new scientific discovery goes to prove [Boehme's] profound and intuitive insight into the most secret workings of nature."

"The line of philosophical heredity," wrote H. P. B., "from Patanjali through Plotinus to Jacob Boehme, can be traced like the course of a river through a landscape." Boehme's phraseology will

be found to agree perfectly with the Hindu Upanishads, and his favorite words are almost literally from them, from the *Bhagavad-Gita,* and from other Sanscrit texts. This in spite of the fact that Boehme is known never to have read any of these books.

William Q. Judge remarks that Boehme's Karma must have been "extremely curious, because though he grasped the truth and was able to appreciate it, yet at the same time he could not give it out in its perfect form." The reason is indicated by H. P. B., who wrote that both Boehme and Swedenborg fell short of true clairvoyance, and confused what they saw, because "they could never rise superior to the general spirit of the Jewish Bible and Sectarian teachings." And in Mr. Judge's *Path* Magazine, we find a suggestion of the nature as well as the difficulties of Boehme's work:

> The truth about Boehme seems to be that he was a necessity for his times and that his writings did great good as they were the result of Illumination, but also that he was a reincarnation of one who in other climes studied such philosophies as the Vedanta, yet by the limitations of his German body, brain, and environment was tinctured through and through with a christianity he could never throw off. And, indeed, that was unnecessary, for he accomplished all that was needed as one of the numerous factors in moulding the thought of his time and of many after him.

In the 1860's, Mr. Judge relates, many hundreds of Boehme's books were deliberately sent all over the world: "They were given free to libraries all over the United States, and prepared the way for the work of the Theosophical Society in an appreciable measure, though not wholly." In the light of Theosophy, students can read the spirit behind the letter of Boehme's words, and find there suggested the wisdom-religion of old. Boehme assumed a Universal Principle, the Causeless Cause and Source of everything in the universe; the eternal duality of manifested existence; and the evolution of the universe of seven planes, which gives nature and man a septenary constitution. "Jacob Boehme, by insisting on the fundamental doctrine of the seven properties of everlasting mother Nature, proved himself thereby a great Occultist," declares Madame Blavatsky.

Boehme also discoursed on the spiritual progress of man through the control of his lower nature by his higher Ego. This is his theme in *Of the Supersensual Life,* first published in 1624, the year of Boehme's death (November 17). THEOSOPHY now publishes a series of four extracts from *Of the Supersensual Life,* the first of which appears in this issue.

Lest Boehme's use of the term "God" be misunderstood, H. P. B.'s statement in the *Glossary* should be noted. She says that it was the spiritual *Ego* "which Jacob Boehme, like so many other untrained mystics, mistook for God. . . . Had this great Theosophist mastered Eastern Occultism he might have expressed it otherwise. He would have known then that the 'god' who spoke through his poor uncultured and untrained brain, was his own divine *Ego,* the omniscient Deity within himself, and that what that Deity gave out was not in 'what measure he pleased,' but in the measure of the capacities of the mortal and temporary dwelling IT informed."

For a discussion of the life and work of Boehme, the "great Theosophist," we refer the reader to THEOSOPHY XXVI, 386. Special attention is called to Mr. Judge's article, "Jacob Boehme and the Secret Doctrine," reprinted in THEOSOPHY VI, 127, in which the following "prophecy" occurs:

> [Boehme] performed his work, and there can be no manner of doubt about his succeeding incarnation. As Krishna says in the Bhagavad-Gita, he has been already or will shortly be "born into a family of wise devotees"; and thence "he will attain the highest walk."

"BIBLE OF MANKIND"

Emerson passed the afternoon with me. We had desultory conversation on Swedenbourg [*sic*], Bruno, Behmen, and others of this sublime school. I proposed that some measures should be taken to put English readers in possession of the works of these great minds. Confucius, Zoroaster, Paracelsus, Galen, Plato, Bruno, Behmen, Plotinus, More, Swedenbourg, etc., should be in the hands of every earnest student of the Soul. Had I the means, I should like to collect these works and set scholars upon translating them into our tongue. It would be a noble enterprise, worth living to execute. We should have access to the fountains of truth through the purest channels. —BRONSON ALCOTT

OF THE SUPERSENSUAL LIFE

By Jacob Boehme

THE disciple said to his Master: Sir, how may I come to the supersensual life, so that I may see God, and may hear God speak?

The Master answered and said: Son, when thou canst throw thyself into That, where no creature dwelleth, though it be but for a moment, then thou hearest what God speaketh.

Disciple: Is that where no creature dwelleth near at hand; or is it afar off?

Master: It is in thee. And if thou canst, my son, for a while but cease from all thy thinking and willing, then thou shalt hear the unspeakable words of God.

Disciple: How can I hear him speak, when I stand still from thinking and willing?

Master: When thou standest still from the thinking of self, and the willing of self; "When both thy intellect and will are quiet, and passive to the impressions of the Eternal Word and Spirit; and when thy soul is winged up, and above that which is temporal, the outward senses, and the imagination being locked up by holy abstraction," then the eternal hearing, seeing, and speaking will be revealed in thee; and so God "heareth and seeth through thee," being now the organ of *his* Spirit; and so God speaketh in thee, and whispereth to thy spirit, and thy spirit heareth his voice. Blessed art thou therefore if that thou canst stand still from self-thinking and self-willing, and canst stop the wheel of thy imagination and senses; forasmuch as hereby thou mayest arrive at length to see the great salvation of God, being made capable of all manner of divine sensations and heavenly communications. Since it is nought indeed but thine own hearing and willing that do hinder thee, so that thou dost not see and hear God.

Disciple: But wherewith shall I hear and see God, forasmuch as he is above nature and creature?

Master: Son, when thou art quiet and silent, then art thou as God was before nature and creature; thou art that which God then was; thou art that whereof he made thy nature and creature: Then thou hearest and seest even with that wherewith God himself saw and heard in thee, before ever thine own willing or thine own seeing began.

Note.—From Dialogue I.

DISCIPLE: What now hinders or keeps me back, so that I cannot come to that, wherewith God is to be seen and heard?

MASTER: Nothing truly but thine own willing, hearing, and seeing do keep thee back from it, and do hinder thee from coming to this supersensual state. And it is because thou strivest so against that, out of which thou thyself art descended and derived, that thou thus breakest thyself off, with thy own willing, from God's willing, and with thy own seeing from God's seeing. Inasmuch as in thine own seeing thou dost see in thine own willing only, and with thine own understanding thou dost understand but in and according to this thine own willing, as the same stands divided from the divine will. This thy willing moreover stops thy hearing, and maketh thee deaf towards God, through thy own thinking upon terrestrial things, and thy attending to that which is without thee; and so it brings thee into a ground, where thou art laid hold on and captivated in nature. And having brought thee hither, it overshadows thee with that which thou willest; it binds thee with thine own chains, and it keeps thee in thine own dark prison which thou makest for thyself; so that thou canst not go out thence, or come to that state which is supernatural and supersensual. . . . Thou must resign up thy will to God. Thou must hate thy own will, and forbear from doing that to which thy own will doth drive thee. Thou must bow thy soul under the cross, heartily submitting thyself to it, that thou mayest be able to bear the temptations of nature and creature. And if thou dost thus, know that God will speak into thee, and will bring thy resigned will into himself, in the supernatural ground; and then thou shalt hear, my son, what the Lord speaketh in thee.

DISCIPLE: This is a hard saying, master; for I must forsake the world, and my life too, if I should do thus.

MASTER: Be not discouraged hereat. If thou forsakest the world, then thou comest into that out of which the world is made; and if thou losest thy life, then thy life is in that for whose sake thou forsaketh it. Thy life is in God, from whence it came into the body; and as thou comest to have thine own power faint and weak and dying, the power of God will then work in thee and through thee.

DISCIPLE: Nevertheless as God hath created man in and for the natural life, to rule over all creatures on earth, and to be a lord over all things in this world, it seems not to be at all unreasonable, that man should therefore possess this world and the things therein for his own.

MASTER: If thou rulest over all creatures but outwardly, there cannot be much in that. But if thou hast a mind to possess all things, and to be a lord indeed over all things in this world, there is quite another method to be taken by thee.

DISCIPLE: Pray, how is that? And what method must I take, whereby to arrive at this sovereignty?

MASTER: Thou must learn to distinguish well betwixt the thing, and that which only is an image thereof; betwixt that sovereignty which is substantial, and in the inward ground or nature, and that which is imaginary, and in an outward form, or semblance; betwixt that which is properly angelical, and that which is no more than bestial. If thou rulest now over the creatures externally only, and not from the right internal ground of thy renewed nature; then thy will and ruling is verily in a bestial kind or manner, and thine at best is but a sort of imaginary and transitory government, being void of that which is substantial and permanent, the which only thou art to desire and press after. Whereas by thy willing and ruling thus after a bestial manner, thou bringest also thy desire into a bestial essence, by which means thou becomest infected and captivated therein, and gettest therewith a bestial nature and condition of life. But if thou shalt have put off the bestial and ferine nature, and if thou hast left the imaginary life, and quitted the low imaged condition of it; then art thou come into the super-imaginariness, and into the intellectual life, which is a state of living above images, figures, and shadows; and so thou rulest over all creatures, being re-united with thine original, in that very ground or source, out of which they were and are created; and henceforth nothing on earth can hurt thee. For thou art like all things; and nothing is unlike thee.

DISCIPLE: O loving master, pray teach me how I may come the shortest way to be like unto all things.

MASTER: With all my heart. There is no shorter way than this; neither can there be a better way found. Unless thou turn and become as a child, thou shalt not see the kingdom of God. This do, and nothing shall hurt thee; for thou shalt be at friendship with all the things that are, as thou dependest on the author and fountain of them, and becomest like him, by such dependence, and by the union of thy will with his will. But mark what I have further to say; and be not thou startled at it, though it may seem hard for thee at first to conceive. If thou wilt be like all things, thou must forsake all things; thou must turn thy desire away from them all, and not desire

or hanker after any of them; thou must not extend thy will to possess that for thy own, or as thine own, which is something, whatsoever that something be. For as soon as ever thou takest something into thy desire, and receivest it into thee for thine own, or in propriety, then this very something (of what nature soever it is) is the same with thyself; and this worketh with thee in thy will, and thou art thence bound to protect it, and to take care of it, even as of thy own being. But if thou dost receive nothing into thy desire, then thou art free from all things, and rulest over all things at once. For thou hast received nothing for thine own, and art nothing to all things; and all things are as nothing to thee. Thou art as a child, which understands not what a thing is; and though thou dost perhaps understand it, yet thou understandest it without mixing with it, and without sensibly affecting or touching thy perception, even in that manner wherein God doth rule and see all things; he comprehending all, and yet nothing comprehending him.

DISCIPLE: Ah! how shall I arrive at this heavenly understanding, at this sight of all things in God, at this pure and naked knowledge which is abstracted from the senses; at this light above nature and creature; and at this participation of the divine wisdom which oversees all things, and governs through all intellectual beings? For, alas, I am touched every moment by the things which are about me; and overshadowed by the clouds and fumes which rise up out of the earth. I desire therefore to be taught, if possible, how I may attain such a state and condition as no creature may be able to touch me, to hurt me; and how my mind, being purged from sensible objects and things, may be prepared for the entrance and habitation of the divine wisdom in me?

MASTER: Thou desirest that I would teach thee how thou art to attain it; and I will direct thee to our master, from whom I have been taught it, that thou mayest learn it thyself from him, who alone teacheth the heart. Think what thou pleasest, and be never so much delighted in the activity of thine own reason, thou shalt find that in thine own power, and without such a total surrender to God, and to the life of God, thou canst never arrive at such a rest as this, or the true quiet of the soul, wherein no creature can molest thee, or so much as touch thee. Which when thou shalt, by grace, have attained to, then with thy body thou art in the world, as in the properties of outward nature; but with thy will thou walkest in heaven, and art at the end from whence all creatures are proceeded forth, and to which they return again. And then thou canst in this END,

which is the same with the BEGINNING, behold all things outwardly with reason, and inwardly with the mind; and so mayest thou rule in all things and over all things.

DISCIPLE: O master, the creatures which live in me do withhold me, that I cannot so wholly yield and give up myself as I willingly would. What am I to do in this case?

MASTER: Let not this trouble thee. Doth thy will go forth from the creatures? Then the creatures are forsaken in thee. They are in the world; and thy body, which is in the world, is with the creatures. But spiritually thou walkest with God, and conversest in heaven; being in thy mind redeemed from earth, and separated from creatures, to live the life of God. And if thy will thus leaveth the creatures, and goeth forth from them, even as the spirit goeth forth from the body at death; then are the creatures dead in it, and do live only in the body in the world. Since if thy will do not bring itself into them, they cannot bring themselves into it, neither can they by any means touch the soul. . . . The Holy Ghost dwelleth in the will, and the creature dwelleth in the body.

DISCIPLE: O my loving master, pray teach me how I may come to such a constant course, and to such a daily dying from all creaturely objects; for how can I abide continually in repentance?

MASTER: When thou leavest that which loveth thee, and lovest that which hateth thee; then thou mayest abide continually in repentance.

DISCIPLE: What is it that I must thus leave?

MASTER: All things that love and entertain thee, because thy will loves and entertains them: All things that please and feed thee, because thy will feeds and cherishes them: All creatures in flesh and blood; in a word, all visibles and sensibles, by which either the imagination or sensitive appetite in men are delighted and refreshed. These the will of thy mind, or thy supreme part must leave and forsake; and must even account them all its enemies. This is the leaving of what loves thee. And the loving of what hates thee, is the embracing the reproach of the world.

DISCIPLE: How shall I be now able to subsist in this anxiety and tribulation arising from the world, so as not to lose the eternal peace, or not enter into this rest?

MASTER: If thou dost once every hour throw thyself by faith beyond all creatures, beyond and above all sensual perception and apprehension, yea, above discourse and reasoning, into the abyssal

mercy of God, and yieldest thyself fully and absolutely thereinto; then thou shalt receive power from above to rule over death, and the devil, and to subdue hell and the world under thee: And then thou mayest subsist in all temptations, and be the brighter for them.

DISCIPLE: Blessed is the man that arriveth to such a state as this. But, alas! poor man that I am, how is this possible as to me? And what, O my master, would become of me, if I should ever attain with my mind to that, where no creature is? Must I not cry out, "I am undone!"

MASTER: Son, why art thou so dispirited? Be of good heart still; for thou mayest certainly yet attain to it. . . . All things are made possible to thee. If it were that thy will, O thou of little courage, could break off itself for one hour, or even but for one-half hour, from all creatures, and plunge itself into that where no creature is, or can be; presently it would be penetrated and clothed upon with the supreme splendour of the divine glory.

THEOSOPHISTS

A name by which many mystics at various periods of history have called themselves. The Neo-Platonists of Alexandria were Theosophists; the Alchemists and Kabbalists during the mediaeval ages were likewise so called, also the Martinists, the Quietists, and other kinds of mystics, whether acting independently or incorporated in a brotherhood or society. All real lovers of divine Wisdom and Truth had, and have, a right to the name, rather than those who, appropriating the qualification, live lives or perform actions opposed to the principles of Theosophy. For the Theosophists of the current century have already visibly impressed themselves on modern literature, and introduced the desire and craving for some philosophy in place of the blind dogmatic faith of yore, among the most intelligent portions of human-kind. Such is the difference between past and modern THEOSOPHY.

—H. P. B.

AMONG YOUTH-COMPANIONS

"YOU say this School we're going to isn't a Sunday School, nor an ordinary school," Lilian commented to her friend Gail as they started out. "You'll have to explain that a little. What *do* you study there?"

"Well, not different things from what you study in an ordinary school," began Gail, "yet from an entirely different point of view. Think of all known subjects as arranged in a circle," she suggested. "Then one subject would overlap the next, so to say. That's how it is in an ordinary school, when you see the relation between subjects. But now suppose that circle of knowledge is really the rim of a great wheel with spokes representing the main branches of learning. As you follow one spoke, all the others draw nearer, until they meet at the center. From that center-point you would not say merely that all knowledge is related, but that it is actually one, a unity. That's the way in this school. Instead of moving around outside the wheel, we try to go to the center, the source of all knowledge, and look from the inside out."

"Well, when it comes right down to learning, what advantage is there in this method you speak of?" was Lilian's next question.

"For one thing, this is an education no man can outgrow, but any child can begin," Gail replied. "It is a knowledge that grows with the student, or rather, unfolds within him, naturally and gradually. It lasts for life, and even lives, and meets his needs as they develop."

"So, then, you teach reincarnation?" Lilian observed.

"Of course," said Gail. "We learn that in nature no energy is lost or wasted, but only transformed. Man is a part of nature, under nature's laws. Are we to say that the life in his form, his soul, has only one 'house,' or body, when all the rest of life has many houses in succession? No, in this school we do not separate the laws of human nature from the laws of Great Nature. We show the child that there is one law for the whole universe. This, you might say, is where science merges with ethics."

"How do you mean?"

"Because the same law that brings physical energy cycling back, also returns the energy expressed in our thoughts and acts back to their origin. Then we call it the law of ethical causation, or action and reaction. This gives us a sense of responsibility toward our

present and our future, since we can see that we are the ones who make them what they are. This idea is not new. Plato in his time, and Emerson in his, were confirmed in this belief."

"What do you teach first?" Lilian asked then.

"What Plato would call universal ideas," replied Gail, "because they apply to everything in the universe. They are three: that everything is alive, is acting according to law, and is growing."

"That's simple enough," Lilian remarked.

"Yes," Gail went on, "that is knowledge in its purest form, and seems to have a special attraction for children. Perhaps we all begin at the center of that 'wheel' of knowledge, and that is why fundamental ideas appeal to us from the first. Did you ever notice what a universal being a child is? Interested in everything and everybody, and especially in whys and wherefores. He's a natural philosopher, in his own way. And this morning you will see the smallest children studying the most basic philosophical conceptions. They understand them better than their elders sometimes, because they see them with clear minds."

"But when they become boys and girls they are usually more interested in one field than another," Lilian pointed out. "What happens then?"

"Why, the child just starts down one of the 'spokes' of the wheel," Gail said. "But even though he develops his individuality in his chosen field, he need never lose the universality he began with, for he knows that all fields of learning have a common source and common ideas. Men have always longed to keep the child-heart in the grown man, for that is a symbol of purity, sincerity and simplicity. This school makes that possible, because what is taught the child, however innocent, is the same truth studied by the man, however wise."

"You mean grown-ups just learn those three simple ideas, too?" Lilian asked, in some surprise.

"Everybody thinks sometimes of one or more of these ideas," Gail said. "But there is a great need to *think them through* thoroughly. Don't let their simplicity deceive you, for they are capable of universal application. We hold that when you know them completely you know the whole of knowledge, because you know the essential nature of all things and beings. Take the first idea, for instance, that all is life, and consider its implications. This includes everything, even stones. We teach the children that wherever they

see a form of any kind, they must understand that behind it, invisible to their eyes, is an in-*form*-ing spirit or life. Where does that life come from, and how does it operate in the form? How is the pattern for the form established? Has man anything to do with it? And man himself is a tremendous subject. Even if we consider only his life here on earth, which is but a part of his complete existence, there still are mysteries enough to more than occupy us while we are here. What is a thought, and does it affect matter?"

"That's enough!" Lilian interrupted. "You left me behind long ago. I'll grant you there's enough to study. But, tell me this. Do you give tests as in a regular school?"

"No, because this isn't a 'regular' school by ordinary standards, and because the most important knowledge gained cannot be measured by external standards," Gail answered. "We think a child is not just a new brain and body. We try to look behind *his* form, too, and consider the old soul who has reincarnated there, and who needs help in bringing through his knowledge and skill in a new body. Soul-knowledge cannot be taught. All that anyone can do is present it. Each learns for himself, and he alone can test himself. The only learning that can be tested by another is what we call head-learning, intellectual knowledge. But since this is not so valuable as heart-learning, which cannot be measured by another, we simply do not give examinations."

"What do you mean by 'heart-learning' and 'soul-knowledge,' and why are they so much more important than regular learning?" Lilian wanted to know.

"Both terms are names for knowledge of principles, those universals that we were talking about a moment ago," Gail explained. "It is called 'soul'-knowledge because it is knowledge of the 'soul' or essence of things. It is a psychological fact, you know, that telling something to someone else helps you remember it yourself. Well, it is the same with any knowledge. When we apply what we learn in action, it isn't head-learning any more, but heart-learning, that is, real learning. And when we have learned it by heart, it is ours forever, because it becomes part of our soul. Head-learning dies with the body and brain, but heart-learning is immortal.

"—And here we are at Theosophy School," she broke off, as they approached groups of people gathered outside the building. "Now for the next hour, see if I've really told you anything."

CYCLES OF PSYCHISM

VI

NEW forms of psychism are evidenced by bizarre new arrivals in the field of religious cults. The newspapers teem with advertisements of swamis, yogis and "paramahamsas" who claim to be in touch with all manner of celestial beings and teachers, whose wisdom is now for sale, generally on the easy payment basis. Psychic apostles vie with one another in their claims of knowing the unknowable, doing the impossible, and revealing every last secret of the universe. The more fantastic the claim, the more are attracted as followers, it appears. We have lately been favored with incarnations of Saint Germain, Jesus, and George Washington. From Tibet comes a "white lama," formerly of Arizona, who promises to relieve the sophisticated of their *ennui* by instruction in Asiatic Mysteries never before made public. Others join religious with political appeals, and allege that a corps of statisticians and researchers are now perfecting the blueprints for a new "planned" (magic word!) society. Who can wonder that, a few years ago, when Orson Welles produced a Martian invasion on his radio program, listeners from Florida to Oregon rushed distractedly about, wondering how to protect themselves from these horrid visitors out of the sky, and even a college professor or two went out to look for them somewhere in the Jersey meadows!

In 1939, Walter Lippmann, with a wisdom he could hardly have himself understood, named the tragic victims of modern psychism "the spiritual proletariat of the modern age." They "hear all the latest news and all the latest opinions, but have no philosophy by which they can distinguish the true from the false, the credible from the incredible, the good from the bad." And, he adds, "the eruption of their volcanic and hysterical energy is the revolution that is shaking the world."

Here, in America, a great psychic mutation is under way, the full developments of which may not disclose themselves for scores of years. Now, at its outset, little more is visible than the paroxysms of the decline of an old order, the backwash and carnage of a world that has lost its sense of legitimate purpose. Modern writers have habituated themselves to think of this transition in political terms, founding their judgments of what the future holds on theories of society which had their beginning in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. But the change which the human race is entering upon is

more profound by far than any mere political alteration. When it is complete, new concepts of reality will have emerged and won acceptance, and tomorrow's social order will have adapted itself to laws of human relations as yet only guessed at by the few.

The biological analogy of "mutation" is a good one, for this change, according to the Theosophical view, will mark a fundamental alteration in the inter-relation of the principles of man's psychic organism. One of its results will be general recognition that man is not merely a physical being, but is more essentially an embodied *mind,* embodied feelings, hopes, aspirations and desires. These principles, in the cycle to come, will be acknowledged as the primary attributes of *human* beings, and the orbits of scientific and religious investigation will thus attain new orientation. But, as with every realignment of the evolutionary forces, an epoch of confusion, of false starts and misguided attempts to anticipate the course of natural development, will inevitably precede the final adjustment of the race to this new period of human growth and self-expression.

Destruction and failure will seem to be predominant characteristics of the cycle, and despair the watchword of the many. For those whose horizons are circumscribed to the past, whose philosophies are rigidly committed to the old assumptions of western civilization, the change will seem to mark the "end of the world," and indeed it will, for them. Like the dreamer too suddenly awakened from his slumber, like the miser impoverished by a single miscalculation, like the child called upon to be and act as a man when he has neither the knowledge, nor the courage nor the strength, the opening of this new vista in human affairs will drive many into the current of efflux, where they will cling to the shattered fragments of the past as the only symbol they know of the life that was.

But for others, the epoch will be recognized as a mighty challenge to their moral resources and their self-reliance. The ascending torch of human intelligence will meet the intenser flame of egoic divinity in its descent to a more complete participation in the life on earth. An age of builders will dawn, of educators and healers, without precedent or comparison in the history of present humanity. This is the message and the prophecy of Theosophy, brought to the world to lighten the way to the "new order of ages," and to ease the travail of its birth.

Hence the warnings, the strict injunctions of the Teacher, H. P. Blavatsky. She took no morbid delight in spreading a Jeremiad doctrine of fear and retribution. She but repeated what she knew

of the eternal law of cycles, upraised and proclaimed out of the lore of the perfected men of the race, whose wisdom and practical knowledge of cyclic evolution alone can bring humanity through the terrible dangers of the transition age. Speaking to American theosophists of the last century, she told of these dangers, and of the opportunities for service that are unfolding in the present:

> As the preparation for the new cycle proceeds, as the fore-runners of the new sub-race make their appearance on the American continent, the latent psychic and occult powers in man are beginning to germinate and grow. . . . Your position as the fore-runners has its own special perils as well as its special advantages. Psychism, with all its allurements and all its dangers, is necessarily developing among you, and you must beware lest the Psychic outrun the Manasic and Spiritual development. Psychic capacities held perfectly under control, checked and directed by the Manasic principle, are valuable aids in development. But these capacities running riot, controlling instead of controlled, using instead of being used, lead the Student into the most dangerous delusions and certainty of moral destruction. Watch therefore carefully this development, inevitable in your race and evolution-period so that it may finally work for good and not for evil; and receive, in advance, the sincere and potent blessings of Those whose good-will will never fail you, if you do not fail yourselves. . . .
>
> Theosophy alone can save the Western world from that selfish and unbrotherly feeling that now divides race from race, one nation from the other; and from that hatred of class and social considerations that are the curse and disgrace of so-called Christian peoples. Theosophy alone can save it from sinking entirely into that mere luxurious materialism in which it will decay and putrefy as civilizations have done. In your hands, brothers, is placed in trust the welfare of the coming century; and great as is the trust, so great is also the responsibility.

There is nothing "evil" or "wicked" in the psychic nature itself. The evil results from lack of control, from the free indulgence of desire which, when unleashed and increasingly gratified, becomes *insatiable* in its demands. The more the powers of mind are developed, the more extensive become the responsibilities of man, and the greater the crimes of which he is capable. Misuse of mental powers, and here misuse means *selfish* use, is incalculably more far-reaching in its destructive effects than the abuse of physical powers.

Uncontrol, which is the veritable root of psychism, leads to progressive stages of irresponsible exercise of powers, ending in brutal lack of concern for the welfare of others, if for no other reason than that

the existence of those others has been forgotten during the ever more engrossing pursuit for satisfaction. The selfishness and narrow partisanships of a civilization founded on material and physical powers are as the petty sins of children when compared with the possible applications of psychic powers for selfish ends during the cycle to come. A point is reached in the union of desire with intellect and the subtler forms of psychic perception, when rationalization of selfishness becomes absolute. This is the death of all morality, and the beginning of a deliberate career in evil for evil's sake. The only protection against such a fate for the human race is the practice of moral discipline, and the study of Theosophy, the philosophy which will convince mankind that such discipline is both necessary, just and desirable. Comprehensive grasp of the hidden laws of nature, even intellectually, is not possible without thorough investigation of the Theosophical teachings as a whole.

For example, the *cyclic* character of psychic manifestations is dependent on the Theosophical teaching of the three lines of evolution, and the successive emphasis which the course of human development places upon the principles involved in these divisions. A passage from the *Ocean of Theosophy* will illustrate:

> We find Theosophy teaching that at the present point of man's evolution he is a fully developed quaternary with the higher principles partly developed. Hence it is taught that to-day man shows himself to be moved by passion and desire. This is proved by a glance at the civilizations of the earth, for they are all moved by this principle, and in countries like France, England, and America a glorification of it is exhibited in the attention to display, to sensuous art, to struggle for power and place, and in all the habits and modes of living where gratification of the senses is sometimes esteemed the highest good.
>
> But as Mind is being evolved more and more as we proceed in our course along the line of race development, there can be perceived in all countries the beginning of the transition from the animal possessed of the germ of real mind to the man of mind complete. This day is therefore known as the "transition period," when every system of thought, science, religion, government, and society is changing, and men's minds are only preparing for an alteration. Man is not yet fully conscious, and reincarnations are needed to at last complete the incarnation of the whole trinity (the higher, spiritual man) in the body. When that has been accomplished the race will have become as gods.

The mysteries of psychic phenomena are to be accounted for by the as yet imperfect incarnation of mind, which is a *progressive* descent, and which requires a corresponding aspiration and striving on

the part of mankind. It is because the full powers of mind are not yet active in the race that the scientist is wandering in the dark, confounded and confused by all that hypnotism and other strange things bring before him. Because these powers are withheld until the appropriate evolutionary cycle, the learned are compelled to speak of the "subconscious mind," the "unconscious," and the like. Hence, also, the bewilderment of both scientists and theologians, when, in the last century, the flood tide of psychism broke loose over the American continent. But, as in each cycle more and more of the higher powers of man will become accessible, greater knowledge, and power, too, will become possible. Finally, with full power and responsibility, with minds fully illuminated, all men will be compelled to choose between good and evil ways, the one leading to heights of spiritual achievement in the common brotherhood of man, the other path, dark with selfishness, to moral ruin. W. Q. Judge's *Ocean of Theosophy,* written in 1893, ends with these words:

> Now, as a century ago, the forces are slackening; for that reason the phenomena of spiritualism are lessening in number and volume; the Lodge hopes by the time the next tide begins to rise that the West will have gained some right knowledge of the true philosophy of Man and Nature, and be then ready to bear the lifting of the veil a little more. To help on the progress of the race in this direction is the object of this book, and with that it is submitted to its readers in every part of the world.

Heterogeneous Believers

While two-thirds of *civilized* society ridicule the mere notion that there is anything in Theosophy, Occultism, Spiritualism, or in the Kabala, the other third is composed of the most heterogeneous and opposite elements. Some believe in the mystical, and even in the *supernatural* (!), but each believes in his own way. Others will rush single-handed into the study of the Kabala, Psychism, Mesmerism, Spiritualism, or some form or another of Mysticism. Result: no two men think alike, no two are agreed upon any fundamental occult principles, though many are those who claim for themselves the *ultima thule* of knowledge, and would make outsiders believe that they are full-blown adepts. Not only is there no scientific and accurate knowledge of Occultism accessible in the West, but no one has any idea of what real Occultism means. Happy are those who escape from black magic as they have neither test nor criterion by which they can distinguish between the true and the false.

—H. P. B.

GOLDEN AGE—END OR BEGINNING?

THE Golden Age of universal tradition is not an article of faith in Theosophy but an article of fact. A note of nostalgia for that bygone state often runs through Theosophical minds, commingled with anticipation of its return. Some do not hesitate to say that the "object" of the Theosophical Movement is to restore the Golden Age (with, perhaps, stream-lined improvements to be drawn from the "benefits" of modern civilization).

Unquestionably, a "Golden Age" will come to any people that conquers its selfishness, not as an object of such conquest but as an inevitable by-product. But it will not be the naïve combination of perfect physical comfort and spiritual enlightenment which seems to compose the dream of many. The Golden Age was a period of *comparative* happiness, and will be again; but *not* because of a plethora of material goods. Largely on the contrary. It was happy because men were *not* the slaves of desire; and being thus inwardly free, enjoyed as a result all the other forms of freedom. Materially, it is beneath the contempt of the modern smart citizen, and is likely to be ushered in again by the disappearance of the resources which now permit such extravagances, with their burning envies and hatreds. Surfeit does not lead to happiness but to the most incurable unhappiness.

But, laying aside the material aspects of a "Golden Age," the idea that the Theosophical Movement has its true fruition and culmination therein, or that its ends lie within the confines of matter at all, is a mistake. Theosophy is not concerned with the mutable; and the very gratifications afforded by any material experience depend implicitly on the mutability thereof.

The illusions of a Golden Age differ little in quality from those of Devachan; the real joy that is in them derives from the fact that in such epochs the soul of man is more perceptive of the beams from the *permanent* radiance of Spirit as reflected temporarily from material objects. There are *two* kinds of Golden Age for the individual, as for the nation—the declining years or days of one who has lived righteously and is about to die, and the glamour of childhood. The first is a preview of the rosy dawn of Devachan; the second is lighted by the last rays of the setting sun of the Spirit as it is obscured by the rising barricades of the flesh. Yet so perverted is our view that we grieve over the sunrise and rejoice at the coming of twilight! The happiest possible earth-life is a sombre nightmare in contrast with

our modes of existence beyond the veils of matter. Fortunate is man, who for one day in the flesh spends thirty days beneath the skies of Indra!

Few realize that the Golden Age is the seed of the Iron Age: it is the joy of the former that entices the roots of desire to strike deeply into the soil of matter, to be torn out in anguish at a later date. In this Iron Age the reflection of spirit begins to be mistaken for a material reality. In truth, "good Karma" consists of anything, whether learning, meditation, or sorrow, that tends to rip the veils of material illusion.

There come times of great grief or disappointment, wherein our passionate grasp on matter is nearly broken. We then search the past for memories that burn more than they bless; search the mists of the future for new illusions of hope, and carefully tend our remaining ties so that they may grow to replacement stature, so building anew our little prison cell. It is only in lonesome later years, the turmoil of the moment subsided, that we see that the Gates of Gold had actually come unlatched for the moment; but that we had not had the courage to force them open and pass through. Thus had they closed firmly once more, to await the ministering revelation of some new sorrow.

As pleasure was our road into matter, so pain must be our road out of it. It is for us to choose whether it shall be the grinding unsought grief of material disaster, or the pain which is in reality no pain because it is glory—the pain of search and of service, the *voluntary* uprooting of the weed of self before its burgeoning growth reaches high enough to be torn out by the storm of catastrophe.

To whoever succeeds in this enterprise, the panorama of alternating ages of light and darkness—as men see them—becomes the play of shadows. Such an one has reached the heights upon which the rays of eternal light shine unbroken from dusk to dawn.

Curing Folly

By pouring water upon it, fire can be extinguished; by holding a parasol the effect of the sun's rays can be prevented; by an iron-hook a powerful elephant can be managed; by goading and whipping, bullocks and asses can be made tractable; by administering proper medicine all distempers can be cured; by charming, all poisonous effects can be alleviated: but none of these are efficacious in curing a fool of his folly. —*The Theosophist* II, 189.

What this educator says about the tendency to overlook, if not to scorn, the achievements of the past and to think that only the latest developments are worth while will find an echo in the heart of every Theosophist. How are students to profit by the experience of the past unless the theory of cyclic return of impressions is taught, and demonstrated by the lessons of history? On that basis, there could be cultivated "an imaginative insight into history" which would be a sound foundation for dealing with the present-day incarnations of old ideas, whether true or false.

FACTS OR TRENDS?

The *Times* survey brought to the fore the existence among educators of a sharp cleavage of opinion as to the value of the old-fashioned history lesson compared with the new-fashioned "social studies." This division is sometimes represented as the difference between teaching "facts" and teaching "trends." But this is an extreme statement, and overlooks the fact that history and social studies each need both facts and trends. A well-rounded view of history would exaggerate neither. It would be sure that the facts which, taken together, make up a trend, are seen in their proper proportions, and that the trends studied are *bona fide* movements, not the paths this or that historian wishes had been or would be followed.

HISTORY AND STATES OF MIND

A *Times* columnist gave an interesting sidelight on the debate:

> There is just one point we should like to raise. It has to do with a singular oversight by all the parties to the controversy. The validity of the Nevins-Fraser questions and answers in American history is denied and defended. No one, as far as we are aware, has suggested that in a history quiz there is no such thing as a correct answer that will always be true. All past history changes with our own times and particular states of mind. . . .
>
> Four history tests in the course of a generation, dealing with a couple of well-known Founding Fathers, would have probably yielded the following results, if the candidate was typical of his time or stood in the main current of events, as the saying goes. Thus:
>
> Q. Who was George Washington?
>
> A. (1911): He was the Father of his Country.
>
> (1921): He had false teeth, liked parties, and speculated in Western real estate.
>
> (1931): He was not, in any real sense, a democrat.
>
> (1941): He was the Father of his Country and the titan of World history. . . .

"The Changing Law of Fashion"

It may be objected that our model quiz papers are of the old-fashioned factual type, being concerned with names, dates and places. But as a matter of fact, the newer history which despises dates and names and places and instead concentrates on trends and basic values is not exempt from the changing law of fashion. Thus it is a safe guess that the following examination papers would have received a brilliant 90 per cent or more on different occasions.

Q. Sum up the American record in a few words.

A. (Before 1929): Government of the people, for the people, by the people, with the highest living standard in the world on a continent 3,000 miles wide.

(1929-39): An illusion of popular government on a ravaged and eroded continent dominated by the Profit Motive.

(1939-43): Government of the people, for the people and by the people, both at home in the United States and for all other peoples globally. (New York *Times,* June 30.)

"Legendary" History

While history is subject to the changing winds of the climate of opinion it will of course be impossible to escape the inconstancy of relative truths. The disposition to accept a "correct" answer which is not true indicates that the sorry state of our "history" is not much altered today from what it was when H. P. Blavatsky wrote:

> History itself is dealt with by the so-called historians as unscrupulously as legendary lore. For this, Augustin Thierry has made the *amende honorable,* if one may believe his biographers. He deplored the erroneous principle that made them all (the *would-be* historiographers) lose their way, and each presume to correct tradition, "that *vox populi* which nine times out of ten is *vox Dei*"; and he finally admitted that *in legend alone rests real history;* for "legend," he adds, "is *living* tradition, and three times out of four it is truer than what we call History." . . . "History will tumble down and break into atoms in the lap of the twentieth century, devoured to its foundations by her annalists," said Michelet. Very soon, indeed, under their combined efforts, it will share the fate of those ruined cities in both Americas, which lie deeply buried under impassable virgin forests. Historical facts will remain as concealed from view by the inextricable jungles of modern hypotheses, denials and scepticism. But very happily *actual* History repeats herself, for she proceeds, like everything else, in cycles; and dead facts and events deliberately drowned in the sea of modern scepticism will ascend once more and reappear on the surface. . . . (*S. D.* I, 675-6.)

Not until the march of civilization is seen as part of the larger progress of the human race, according to the evolutionary process outlined in the Theosophical philosophy, will men have any semblance of "*actual* History." The panorama of history is the drama of the soul. The two must be studied together, else the meaning of life is lost.

RELIGION WITHOUT CHURCHES

Under the title, "Men of Armed Forces Turn Toward Religion," a Los Angeles *Times* feature writer describes "an astonishingly widespread undercurrent of religious and spiritual yearning" among soldiers overseas. He feels that the war has inspired "the nation's young manhood" to take "a longer and more serious look at fundamentals." Although he describes an impressive wholesale distribution of Bibles, decorated with a facsimile signature of Franklin D. Roosevelt, and the strenuous efforts of an increasing number of chaplains, he indicates that the men themselves are approaching matters of religion from a broader perspective than that so long identified with the history of western church influence. According to the chaplains:

> Nothing quite similar in today's turning to religion for strength and tranquility occurred . . . in the first World War. Creeds are not involved and sectarianism does not enter the picture. The movement has been spontaneous. It represents inspirations and influences from within (Feb. 7).

HOPEFUL SIGNS VERSUS DANGERS

These observations represent more than a scattering of wishful generalizations about the spiritual nobility of our armed forces. They were made after reflection on attitudes expressed on or near the scene of actual combat, where the struggle of warfare tended to inspire some extremely fundamental reflections. In some of its phases, at least, it appears that war induces more concern than indifference respecting ultimate human destiny. But twin dangers present themselves here. Firstly, the tendency to resign oneself completely to events beyond individual control may discourage individual inquiry; and secondly, none of the churches who represent religion to the world provide the answers that are demanded—which again is likely to produce apathetic resignation.

POINTLESS BATTLES ON DESERTED FRONTS

Under the heading, "Wrangle of Religious Factions Intensified" the following report appeared:

> Hot criticism of the theological doctrine which he attributes to the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, with a special verbal dagger for Harry Emerson Fosdick, was hurled from the pulpit of the Church of the Open Door yesterday by Dr. Robert T. Ketcham of Waterloo, Ia., vice-president of the American Council of Christian Churches.
>
> Declaring that Christendom today is split on the twofold question: "Is the Bible the Word of God and Is Jesus Christ the Son of God?" Dr. Ketcham said that to both questions the Federal Council answers "no" and that the American Council answers "yes."

This "hurling of verbal daggers," while possibly reflecting the proper martial spirit, serves to highlight the futility of attempting to bring younger generations "back to Christianity" at a time when their own intuitions reach out for a broader base. All of this is an old story, yet there are indications that the discouraging tale may be a prelude to the destruction of religious forms and the establishment of religion proper.

Genuine Christian Integrity

Stringent criticisms of church traditions are now being made by prominent churchmen who have either been jarred out of complacent trances or have outgrown them. We quote from a rather unusual sermon delivered in a Methodist church by F. H. Callahan:

> On every hand churchmen are demanding that the nations plan for greater unity and cooperation while many of them are apparently blind to the fact that religion itself constitutes one of the great divisive forces in our very own civilization. All of us, Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, congratulate ourselves that we are no longer guilty of bloody persecutions, yet we perpetuate deep antagonisms which help to postpone and make more difficult the coming of brotherhood in the world.
>
> There is, of course, a positive side to the picture. There are many truly great souls who are bigger than the creeds they recite and broader than the sects to which they belong. Now is the time for them to stand up in their strength and smash the bonds of form and tradition. Most of these traditions have ceased to have meaning, anyway.
>
> Says Joseph Fort Newton, 'There is not a sect whose original reason for being is valid today, or whose central insistence has any relation to the actual issues of our time.' There are many people of indifferent faith who would respond instantly to an appeal which truly represented all faiths. Now is a time for leaders of untrammeled minds and courageous hearts to lift such a standard, to present such an appeal. (New York *Times*, June 21.)

How Do We Get There?

> We had better get our house of faith in order before the boys who fight this war come home. For when the Protestant and Catholic and Jewish lads who are now forgetting their little differences under the stress of danger return they will not fit so easily into religious pigeonholes as they once did. Some of them will have found that the only faith worthy of great hours is a faith too big for sectarian labels. Perhaps this global war will help to drive us to a global faith.

The religious view which Dr. Callahan hopes will mature to offer some help to a shaken world is not a "doctrine." Men can not be led to it by emotional appeal. It is something the individual must evolve for himself through *mental* devotion. Men with philosophic vision can merely point to the avenues of thought that have helped bring *to them* meaning and purpose in living. No vision that fails to incorporate the first step incident to its attainment can bring more than temporary solace. The step now most deeply needed is thorough re-examination of religion and religions from an undenominational standpoint.

"The Building Stones For a New World"

Harrison W. Fry, writing for the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, is an unconscious spokesman for the labors that can yet bring to bear a wider realization of the First Object of the Theosophical Movement. His article is headed "Common Idea Seen in World Creeds." The subhead also has a familiar ring to students of Theosophical literature, "Study of Great Religions Reveals Same Truths Appeared in All":

> Men and women around the world today and back through thousands of years of history have and have had common denominators of unity in great nuggets of truth found in their varied religious literature.
>
> In these nuggets are the building stones for a new world. And that does not mean a synthetic religion. It does mean an appreciation of the sincere search for truth by men of other religions and races. The Hindu scriptures say that many paths lead to the feet of the mother-god. Perhaps the paths may merge under greater understanding. Gandhi, the Hindu, sees no inconsistency in his having a picture of Christ in his home. (June 18, 1942.)

The First Objective

Mr. Fry assembles significant quotations on the central religious themes from the Tao Te Ching, Confucius and Buddha, as well as from the Christian Bible. He emerges with a basic realization: "Cornerstone from the nuggets of truth of the great religions upon

which the new world must be built is the belief in the brotherhood of men," and he finds it possible to use the Mohammedan's *Koran* to convey a lesson in tolerance so long unlearned by the western church:

> We believe in God, and that which hath been sent down to us, and that which hath been sent down to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob . . . and that which hath been given to Moses and Jesus. . . . No difference do we make between any of them. . . ."

Such calls, for an understanding of the philosophical equation that must be solved before we can hope to see a realization of economic brotherhood, are not isolated.

"A Principle of Human Relations"

A Bulletin of the American Youth Commission carries an article by the President of the National Council of Christians and Jews:

> Will parity of economic opportunity be practiced for every man, regardless of color, creed, or national origin? It will, if a sufficient number of people see that the universe is so constructed that brotherhood is a principle of human relations as true as the law of gravity in physics. No economy long can work if any group of humans refuses to share the economic opportunities it wants to keep for itself.

In all this can be seen the fulfillment of Theosophical "prophecies" for the coming half-century. The Theosophical Movement may follow in broad outlines the prototypal attempts to realize the three objects outlined in 1875. H. P. Blavatsky and W. Q. Judge brought to the coming age more even than to their own the outlines of the only philosophical course that can bring "salvation" to mankind. Theosophical education, broadly speaking, may be inspired wherever individuals call for opportunities to think through fundamental philosophical questions on a universal level.

Education In Religion

Such recommendations as the following, a brief letter to the *New Statesman and Nation,* indicate immediate points of departure upon which Theosophists can agree with thousands of progressive thinkers who still profess nominal allegiance to a particular sect:

> I see no harm in religious instruction and would recommend that it be carried out thoroughly and scientifically as a branch of philosophy on the principle that the future citizen be rendered capable of determining his beliefs for himself, independently of clergy or parents. But I cannot see how a religious education can be given

> except as part of a system which, as a whole, is as complete as the total resources of human knowledge can make it; none of the champions of sectarian doctrines make such a claim for the children as this: maybe they recognise the incompatibilities involved and have fear for their interests. I am a parent myself, and though I have religious beliefs of my own, I still think that my children should have the opportunity, and the responsibility, of making a suitable choice for themselves. I would like, therefore, to have every reasonable religious claim put before them in State schools without prejudice in favour of any one. (June 13, 1942.)

The Shape of Things to Come

In fields so diverse that they may seem at first unrelated, intuitions are awakening to a call for religious philosophy that will give rational support to the doctrine of the brotherhood of man. The Theosophists unaware, the poets, educators, scientists, moral philosophers and metaphysicians, whose words bring encouragement to the small body of Theosophical students, are all assisting in the general growth of theo-philosophy. They should approach ever closer through development and disciplined use of the mind; reflection based on study must be the way of the coming age.

The path of transition from feelings or beliefs to knowledge and understanding is traced by Mr. Judge in these words:

> Sympathy and emotion are as much parts of the great whole as knowledge, but inquiring students wish to know all that lies in the path. The office of sympathy, charity, and all other forms of goodness, so far as the effect on us is concerned, is to entitle us to help. By this exercise we inevitably attract to us those souls who have the knowledge and are ready to help us to acquire it also. But while we ignore philosophy and do not try to attain to right discrimination, we must pass through many lives, many weary treadmills of life, until at last little by little we have been forced, without our will, into the possession of the proper seeds of mental action from which the crop of right discrimination may be gathered. (*Gita Notes,* pp. 41-2.)

Study of Cycles

The Foundation for the Study of Cycles, New York, has announced that a medal will be offered to the person who, during 1943, publishes the book or paper which is the most outstanding research into rhythmic and periodic fluctuations in any branch of science. The New York *Times,* reporting the announcement, reviews some cycles already known:

Seasons come and go, hearts beat regularly, tides rise and fall. Everywhere we find cycles long and short. How important they are business men know. Some years ago, for example, the Hudson's Bay Company found that there were wide fluctuations in the number of pelts offered from year to year. Inventories varied and so did prices. It turned out that the fluctuations in abundance of animals was fairly regular and that they could be plotted from 1844 to 1904. Thus it became possible to predict when future peaks and valleys might be expected. A change in business policy with benefit to the Indian trappers resulted.

Similarly it has been shown that elephants are abundant at sixty-two-year intervals, that mice plagues occur every four years, that swarms of insects recur at intervals of two weeks, that the salmon catch has its cycles, that the purchasing power of beef cattle has a rhythm of 14.8 years from peak to peak, that there is a thirty-three-month rhythm in bond prices and retail sales, that pneumonia and influenza reach peaks about every three years.

Why all this should be so is not always clear. Hence the Foundation for the Study of Cycles has framed a program which is bound to be endorsed by every scientist and business man. (January 17.)

A Cyclic Clock Chart

The University of Kansas has a chart in the form of a "clock" which records civilization's great moments since 400 A. D. (New York *Herald Tribune,* January 31.) "The chart shows a rhythm in human affairs, ups and downs which for nearly 1600 years have been repeating themselves in a complicated but perhaps predictable pattern, and all swinging with long-period climatic changes." The idea for the chart originated when Dr. Raymond H. Wheeler traced the history of psychology since ancient Greece, and noticed cycles of development of ideas which alternated between idealism and mechanism. Plotting the periodic pattern along a horizontal base line representing the centuries, he found the rhythm so pronounced that he studied the history of other human activities for other rhythms.

He found the same pattern of ups and downs in art, literature, music, chemistry, invention, physics, biology and other cultural progress. Furthermore, the cycles all were similar in alternating between idealism and mechanism.

Weather Cycles

Then one day a colleague called Dr. Wheeler's attention to a lecture by Dr. A. E. Douglass, University of Arizona astronomer, who had discovered the records of long-time weather cycles in tree

rings. Dr. Wheeler laid the weather cycles on his charts. The weather swings fitted the human cycles. Warm periods coincided with the idealism; cold with the mechanistic periods.

That was the beginning of the Kansas clock. Since then the knowledge of weather cycles has extended from the eleven-year sunspot cycles to include twenty-two to twenty-three-year cycles which seem to be related to sunspots and 170-year cycles which reach a climax about each 510 years. In all these cycles the fit between civilization's cycles and the weather continued good. The chart showed long cold periods centering in 450 A.D., 960 and 1470. Those were the 510-year cycles.

Another such 510-year cycle, if weather history repeats, is due to reach its cold peak around 1980.

. . . the clock chart indicates that the last half of this century is to be a long period of constructive rebuilding of freedom and democracy. No matter what happens in the next ten or twenty years, the clock fixes the great reconstruction time as the last half of the present century.

Intellectual and Spiritual Revolutions

For those who accept H. P. B.'s statement at the end of *The Key to Theosophy,* on the hundred-year cycle in the Theosophical Movement, and her prophecy about the last quarter of the Twentieth Century, the just-quoted prognostications of the clock chart are intensely interesting. The basic principle of Dr. Wheeler's researches was given by H. P. B. in 1877:

The revolution of the physical world, according to the ancient doctrine, is attended by a like revolution in the world of intellect—the spiritual evolution of the world proceeding in cycles, like the physical one.

Thus we see in history a regular alternation of ebb and flow in the tide of human progress. The great kingdoms and empires of the world, after reaching the culmination of their greatness, descend again, in accordance with the same law by which they ascended; till, having reached the lowest point, humanity reasserts itself and mounts up once more, the height of its attainment being, by this law of ascending progression by cycles, somewhat higher than the point from which it had before descended.

The division of the history of mankind into Golden, Silver, Copper and Iron Ages, is not a fiction. We see the same thing in the literature of peoples. An age of great inspiration and unconscious productiveness is invariably followed by an age of criticism and consciousness. The one affords material for the analyzing and critical intellect of the other.

> Thus, all those great characters who tower like giants in the history of mankind, like Buddha-Siddârtha, and Jesus, in the realm of spiritual, and Alexander the Macedonian and Napoleon the Great, in the realm of physical conquests, were but reflexed images of human types which had existed ten thousand years before. . . . (*Isis* I, 34-5.)

"The Circle of Immortality"

The older orders of religious thinking, it seems, are sometimes replaced by more than the negative scepticism engendered by materialistic iconoclasm. Lookout during the past five years has published many significant items indicative of open-minded interest being accorded specific Theosophical ideas. (XXVII, 133, 421; XXIX, 140-1.)

From the standpoint of true education no presentation of a consistent philosophy can lose by a comparison with others which are incomplete. Recommendations made for the establishment of a fair comparison between all forms of religious thought therefore meet the full approval of Theosophists. Very seldom is this process suggested as a practical pattern, though in indirect form Theosophical ideas are benefiting by such comparative presentation in many channels of literature. The September, 1942, issue of *The New Age,* official Masonic publication, is an illustration. While the editors allow one religious Mason to piously repeat the old Christian singsong, the same number includes an article of philosophically constructive flavor. In the first of a series on "Life and Its Mysteries," a 32° Mason writes:

> Strange, indeed, that people who have implicit faith in life after death should imagine the soul to be new at birth. They do not reason deeply enough. If the soul lives after death it must, from necessity, live before birth, as the circle of immortality is not complete unless the living come from the "dead" as well as pass to them. . . . The soul is related to the body as a cause to an effect, and is the matrix from which the body is formed.

Not New and Not Much Older

> "Were all souls created at the same time?" There is no age to the soul. It was never born; it can never die. It is part of the Deity and partakes of His nature, changeless, eternal and indestructible. When occult students say: "He (or she) is a very old soul," they have reference to experience and wisdom. On earth the soul acquires experience through its entanglement with matter. And it is truly amazing how some people can live so long and learn so little! Knowledge and truth are never forced on anyone and people can

> either hasten or retard their progression. Some souls evolve slowly, others rapidly, and the choice and consequences are theirs. Alas, years do not necessarily make a man wiser, only older. . . .
>
> There is no break in the chain of eternity and no interruption in the law of cause and effect. The soul is not new at birth, and is not much older at death, and of necessity must be born many times in spirit that it may attain perfection.

Is such an article the result of direct Theosophical study or o intuition? It may matter very little, since these two actually merg and become one. In either case there is clearly to be seen the increas ing permeation of the Theosophical philosophy, and especially o the idea of Reincarnation.

CREMATION ENDORSED

The first modern cremation, inaugurated as a result of Theosoph cal influence, has finally, after the best part of a century, begun t demonstrate its practical value to dogmatic theology. An item in th New York *Times* (June 27) announces: "Church of England En dorses Cremation." The Church wished it to be clearly understood however, that this commitment "did not in any way affect th church's belief in the resurrection of the body." [!] The historica development of social attitudes respecting this one item of hygieni disposal of the dead is emblematic. To those who persist in thinkin that any religion is good because of the aesthetic values it supposedl brings to its adherents, this and similar instances should illustrat how necessary it is for social progress that religious beliefs be mad rational. (They could then cease being "beliefs.") Just as blin adherence to creedal formulations stultifies the enquiring mind of th individual, so does it make difficult the recognition and adoption o sensible solutions of the most elementary group-problems. Politics economics and sociology are forever retarded by the persistence o mores bequeathed to us by old-time religion. The record of Theo sophical endeavor, on the other hand, shows that the influence o the Wisdom-Religion is of another sort. Theosophy helps provid normal opportunities for consistent social evolution, as the practica implications of its philosophy unfold.